SOUTHEND ON SEA CITY COUNCIL ROLE PROFILE

**DEPARTMENT FOR STRATEGY AND CHANGE**

**PART A: JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| Job Title & Team | Head of Legal Services |
| Reports To | Director of Legal Services |
| Responsible For | Principal Lawyers, Senior Lawyers, Legal Assistants, Paralegals, Trainee Solicitors and Apprentices |
| Level | 13 |
| Main Purpose of the Job | To hold a technical legal caseload of the most complex cases in your area/s of specialism which should also include Local Authority Governance.  To provide direction and leadership to the whole Legal Services team and to ensure that these services are designed and delivered within the Council’s framework of quality standards, performance targets, budgetary control and legislative requirements.  To report to the Director Legal Services and to be accountable for the overall performance of the Legal Services Team.  To directly line manage the Principal Lawyers for the Legal Services Team.  To be the Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council and to deputise for the Director Legal Services as required including advising Members on the strategic implications of complex legal issues and future operational models for the organisation and its services.  To engage with and collaborate with the Democratic Services and Information Governance Managers to promote the identity and role of the Legal Services Team. To attend and actively contribute to the activities of the Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) to lead and support the wider Legal Services Team.  To support the Director and the wider council leadership and to work collaboratively with councillors and officers across the council.  To promote visible and inclusive leadership that demonstrates the behaviours and values of the council and sets out a clear direction and expectation of performance standards.  To champion customer focus by actively listening to and communicating effectively with customers and stakeholders and to promote co-operation across the Council, maintaining a focus on customer support and service quality.  The Legal Services team comprises lawyers managing specialist legal areas including adult and children’s social care, commercial, planning, contract, procurement, licensing, housing (including the ALMO), information governance, employment, litigation, highways and general local government law and governance. The lawyers are divided into teams, each headed by a Principal Lawyer. One of these teams will also have responsibility for the Local Land Charges function of the council. |
| Key Responsibilities | To be accountable for the provision of a modern, customer-focussed legal service which demonstrates value for money and continuous improvement which may include the development of policies and strategies and well as implementation plans for new systems, procedures and processes. Examples of these might be improved document storage and destruction records, a knowledge bank for Legal Services or arrangements to work with other local authorities in a shared services model.  The Head of Legal Services will hold a caseload of complex or politically sensitive cases and lead a team of principals, seniors, lawyers, legal assistants and trainees providing supervision and management as required. Your role is to empower and engage these individuals to continually improve and deliver the best possible outcomes. This includes service planning, performance management, communications and conducting staff appraisals.  You will demonstrate your ability to work with minimal supervision and to bring forward ideas and solutions to the opportunities and challenges that may present themselves in your area of work.  You will be the named and accountable instructing lawyer in commissioning external legal advice on behalf of the council, supported by the relevant Principal and Senior Lawyers as required. You will collectively manage the financial cost of such external legal advice and support to demonstrate Best Value for your clients and the council.  You will work with Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service across the Council to develop professional arrangements for managing complex workloads to budget.  You will develop positive relationships with the elected Members, the Courts and other external bodies (locally, regionally, and nationally) to promote the Council’s priorities and build these relationships to benchmark and share best practice to engender a culture of continuous improvement in your service.  To undertake regular training in relation to the responsibilities as Deputy Monitoring Officer. You will also be proactive in bringing forward training proposals for your personal development as well as those directly related to the requirement of the role, maintaining your CPD and undertaking training in people management appropriate to your role  You will be required to attend Committees as the legal advisor or deputise for the Monitoring Officer at Cabinet or Council meetings as required.  You will promote and role-model the principles of inclusivity, equality and diversity and ensure that these are upheld and embedded across the organisation and demonstrated externally.  You will ensure compliance with health & safety and other relevant legislation across the organisation.  You will manage the Legal Services budget.  Together with the Democratic Services and Information Governance Manager, you will make a positive and active contribution to the aims and vision of Legal Services and demonstrate leadership, role modelling the Councils’ values and behaviours, identifying innovations and new ways of working to improve productivity and wellbeing across the whole of Legal Services.  You will engage in council initiatives such as the mentorship programme.  You will undertake corporate support functions e.g. investigations and appeals where appropriate and take part in corporate working groups as required  You will support emergency planning response and recovery, including the on-call rota.  As a Proper Officer, you will sign notices, orders and other documents and to attest to the Common Seal of the Council.  You may be required to perform an appropriate Incident or Emergency planning role for the council and will be trained accordingly if necessary. |
| Responsibility for Resources | You will be accountable for the whole of the Legal Services budget of approximately £3.5M  You will also be responsible for monitoring the contracts for online research materials and legal advice frameworks, for example PLP, EM Lawshare, Practical Law, Thompson Reuters  You will be the contact person for the Council for the Law Society of England and Wales as well as the Solicitors’ Regulation Authority and HM Land Registry. |
| Standard Phrases | This Post is deemed Politically restricted.  Contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan and adhere to the Council’s Values and Behaviours.  Contribute to the Council’s success by accepting new tasks, helping team members, learning new skills, and striving to improve personal and team results.  Be familiar with Equal Opportunities good practice and with the Council’s requirements for Diversity and to implement this in all aspects of working.  Promote and work in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act and GDPR.  This job description does not form part of your contract of employment |
| Disclosure & Barring Service | You will be required to undergo a Standard DBS check for this role. |

**PART B: PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **Attributes** | **Activity** | **E**ssential **or D**esirable | **How evidenced** |
| Qualifications or membership to a Registered Body | * Appropriate Degree in Law, together with completed practice requirements for a fully-qualified Solicitor or Barrister with at least 7 years post-qualification experience, part of which should have been in the public sector. * Current Practising Certificate from the Law Society of England and Wales or the Bar Council * Level 5 or above qualification in Management, or equivalent experience | E  E  D | C  C  C |
| Knowledge, Experience Skills and Abilities | * Expert and in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation, policies and procedures etc. in more than one of the listed areas of legal expertise required and set out in the Main Purpose section of this Job Description * Experience as a Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer in a local authority and working with elected Members in a political environment. * Knowledge of the legal and governance framework for local authorities * Ability to support the Director of Legal Services in advising on and managing legal risk for the council. * Ability to commission legal services from external providers in a way which optimises value for money and mitigates legal risk to the council. * Experience of providing both written and verbal advice across all sectors of the authority, from officers to Corporate Leadership Team and councillors * Ability to direct and motivate a team which may comprise very experienced lawyers as well as Trainees and, in the case of the Legal Services Place Manager, members of the Local Land Charges Team * Ability to take on corporate tasks on behalf of Legal Services, either as lead or in collaboration with the Democratic Services Manager and Information Governance Manager. * Budget management experience, with the ability to seek out and understand the needs of customers, putting in place all necessary structures and process to forecast budgetary spend, anticipate demand and seek feedback to ensure continuous improvement. * Experience of designing and implementing appropriate new ways of of working to deliver efficiencies which may include cost reduction and income generation activities * Ability to plan activities well in advance and to manage your own caseload as well as to delegate and manage tasks across your team. * Excellent communication skills at all levels inside and outside the Council. * Experience of using ICT and other digital systems to support service improvement | E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  D  D  E  E  E | A I  A I  A I  A I R  A I  A I  I  I  A I  A I  A I  A I  A I |
| Behaviours | ***Driving Positive Change -*** has a future focused approach that can easily respond to different and changing demands. Possesses a positive attitude so that they may adapt to the pace of change. Embraces new technologies and new ideas.  ***Trust and Respect -*** creates mutual trust and remove barriers to help develop a highly collaborative and respectful team. Values feedback and respectfully listens to other people’s opinions.  ***Strong Leadership*** - Leads by example, and through their behaviours and positive professional approach to work. Encourages team motivation and achievements. They actively challenge bad behaviour, respect other people’s views, and are open, transparent and supportive.  ***Acting with integrity and behaving responsibly* -** Takes ownership of their work, responsibility for their actions and decisions and accountable for their performance and development.  Acting with integrity and behaving responsibly is key to ensure the Council and its employees achieving an excellent reputation with residents, partners and businesses.  ***Building relationships to work well together*** - Works to reach common goals; sharing information, supporting colleagues, welcoming feedback, building good relationships and partnerships to improve productivity and effectiveness. Applies an inclusive approach to staff, customers, residents and the community as a whole to deliver efficient and effective services | E  E  E  E  E |  |
| Additional Information for example physical skills or working environment | *You must hold a valid UK Driver’s Licence and be able to work from or attend other venues within the Southend City Council area as required.*  *You will be required to be present in the Civic One offices of Southend City Council on a minimum average of two days per week.*  *You must be able to use computer and other office hardware.* |  |  |

Structure chart must be attached